

An Interesting Non-philatelic Perforated Item

Edited from Notes by Stephen D. Nadler (#2970)

Editors note: Photocopies of the subject of this article were submitted to show yet another use of perforations. In Steve's words: "Although it is not a perfins stamp or cover, it still may be of interest..."

The item is a representative of the inflation 'emergency' money used in many cities in Germany between the years 1914- and 1923. Called Notgeld (emergency money), the item shown is of the type known as Serienscheine (series notes, or notes which are issued as a series of notes of various denominations).

In lieu of an adequate supply of national currency to handle the incredible post World War I inflation, notgeld was issued by towns, banks, other commercial institutions, and even political or other organizations. Expertise is necessary in this field to determine if the particular note or series of notes actually had validity; some was issued only for collectors, some was issued after an expiration date specified on the note had already passed, other notes were issued by organizations or commercial institutions in addition to and invalidated by 'official' city or town notgeld, etc.

Tudor Morris in his book *German Notgeld: An Introduction to Serienscheine* (undated [but more recent than 3/96 based on a citation in the bibliography]) briefly discusses these issues and, generally with a single note illustrating the series, discusses these monies. Quoting from page 49 of this book on which is illustrated a 25 mark variety of this type of banknote Mr. Tudor states "Silk and linen notes of Bielefeld. These attractive interesting notes were issued to celebrate the 700th Anniversary of this major center of the silk and linen industry. They were continued right up to the end of 1923."

I am inverting Steve's discussion of the banknote below to conform to the more standard descriptions given in Morris' book. And one last note before I start on the information submitted by Steve: on the back of the note is a large script circle of characters around the "250 millionen mark" at the center of the note. Again quoting from Morris' book: "The back of this note gives the issuer's name in very difficult

script... Sparkasse Bielefeld or Bielefeld Savings Bank."

Now to Steve's information/transliterations.

The item is a 1923 issue banknote (dated in very small print 4.10.1923 or October 10, 1923), which documents the rapid inflation being experienced in the fine print around the edges of the note. The note is 4 1/2" x 3 3/8" (116 x 87 mm) and is multicolored. It is perforated (cancelled?) 'P. RRUST', with a '+' at the top of the right upright stroke of the 'U'.



P. RRUST.

Writing at the left reading up states "1 unrationed bread 33 million marks". Across the top is reported: "Annual interest rate at the State Bank is 90%. Daily interest rate for money at the stock market is 3-12%". Reading down at the right: "1 Bielefeld gold mark on 21.SEPT.1923 is 43,500,000 marks". And, across the bottom we see: "Comparison of the cost-of-living index 1914: to 28.9.23 [Sept. 28, 1923] is 33,612,000%".

In large letters forming a rectangular border just inside the wording translated above is the following: "The Bielefeld City Savings Bank will pay out against this banknote 250 million marks". And the wording in the upsweeping and downsweeping

arches which surround the central vignette is: "The Ravensberg District supports the old age programs of the City of Bielefeld 2 4 1922..." Within the triangular vignettes in each of the corners there is additional (difficult to read) script writing around the "250" values of the banknote.

The central vignette appears to be an allegory: Ravensberg providing support to help disabled people shed their crutches and become healthy. [Ed. – This description of the central vignette corresponds well with that from Morris' book: "...old people hobbling into the Jungenbrunnen and emerging rejuvenated..."



The back side of the note also documents the inflation of the period. Reading upwards on the left side is: "4th class train ticket in 1914 was 2 pf., on October 11, 1923 it is 660,000 marks", Across the top we learn: "Postage rate on October 1, 1923: one long-distance letter 2 million marks, 1 postcard 800,000 marks". And, down the right side we find that: "100 pounds of rye [grain] is 350 million marks".

Immediately surrounding the ring of triangles (which surrounds the 250 mil M value of the note) is the circular legend: "These notes will be cashed at all savings banks in Bielefeld District, Halle". And as on the front, each of the corner triangles has script legends which are not translated here.

[Let me break in at this point and add a little information that Steve did not include. The four corner triangles on the back of this note are also allegorical. According to Morris: "The four corner silhouettes illustrate one Hennerken Puls bathing in

the Lutterbach, which is polluted by effluent from the local dyeworks, and trying to scrub himself clean afterwards. The smallest print urges people 'to refrain from [defecating] in the Lutterbach, as we're brewing tomorrow'".

I anticipate that the illustrations of the 250 mil M note will not print well, the photocopies of the colored notes struggled with the great range of contrasting colors on the note, so in much reduced format I reproduce the early 25 M value of this series which should show better.]



In closing, Steve writes: "I am interested in learning from anyone if my translations are correct and any further information about this item. (address in membership directory – e-mail [not] is SchlomoX@aol.com).

[Ed. My last words – I promise: I echo Steve's desire for any further relevant information about this numismatic perforation or the item in which it is found, or corrections of the transliterations given.]